

What is claimed is:

1. Method for checking for patient information in a data stream in a medical records system comprising:
  - transferring the data stream in the medical records system;
  - extracting a portion of data from the data stream;
  - automatically comparing the portion of data with a predetermined sequence in a database;
  - automatically determining whether the portion of data comprises patient information based on the comparison; and
  - modifying the portion of data if it comprises patient information.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein transferring the data stream in the medical records system comprises generating a report comprising the data stream.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein transferring the data stream in the medical records system comprises inputting the data stream into the medical records system.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein transferring the data stream in the medical records system comprises sending the data stream to a peripheral device.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein extracting a portion of data from the data stream comprises parsing the data stream.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein automatically comparing the portion of data with a predetermined sequence in a database comprises automatically comparing the portion of data with a predetermined format.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein automatically comparing the portion of data with a predetermined sequence in a database and determining whether the portion of data comprises patient information based on the comparison comprises using rules to specify a sequence of characters that includes patient information.
8. The method of claim 7, wherein the rules comprise an expert system.
9. The method of claim 1, further comprising notifying a user of the portion of data which comprises patient information and suggesting options to modify the portion of data which comprises patient information, and

wherein modifying the portion of data comprises manually selecting one of the options to modify the portion of data.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein modifying the portion of data comprises modifying content of the portion of data.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein modifying the portion of data comprises modifying presentation of the portion of data.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein modifying presentation of the portion of data comprises modifying font of the portion of data.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the patient information is selected from the group consisting of name, postal address, e-mail address, telephone number, social security number, and birthday.

14. Method for checking for patient information in a data stream in a medical records system comprising:

transferring the data stream in the medical records system;

automatically determining at least one characteristic of the data stream;

automatically determining whether a portion of data comprises patient information based on the characteristic; and

modifying the portion of data if it comprises patient information.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the characteristic comprises whether the data stream is a particular form.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein automatically determining whether a portion of data comprises patient information based on the characteristic comprises determining, based on the particular form, whether the data stream comprises patient information.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein the characteristic comprises a particular field.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the portion of data modified is associated with the particular field.

19. A computer-based system for monitoring patient information in a medical records system, said computer-based system comprising:

a transfer device for transferring a data stream in the medical records system;

a memory storing predetermined sequences of patient information; and

a processor being coupled to the memory and the transfer device, the processor comparing a portion of the data stream with at least one predetermined sequence in the memory and determining whether the portion of the data stream comprises patient information based on the comparison.

20. The computer-based system of claim 19, wherein the transfer device comprises an input device.

21. The computer-based system of claim 19, wherein the data stream comprises a generated report; and

wherein the transfer device comprises an output device.

22. The computer-based system of claim 19, wherein the memory further comprises rules; and

wherein the processor comparing a portion of data with at least one predetermined sequence in the memory and determining whether the portion of the data stream comprises patient information based on the comparison comprises using the rules to specify a sequence of characters that includes patient information.

23. The computer-based system of claim 19, wherein the processor modifies the portion of the data stream if it comprises patient information.

24. The computer-based system of claim 23, wherein the processor encrypts the portion of the data stream.

25. The computer-based system of claim 23, further comprising a display; and  
wherein the processor modifies presentation of the portion of the data stream on the display.

26. The computer-based system of claim 19, wherein the processor notifies a user of the portions of the data stream comprising patient information and suggesting alternatives for the portions of the data stream comprising patient information.

27. A computer-based system for monitoring patient information in a medical records system, said computer-based system comprising:

a transfer device for transferring a data stream in the medical records system;

a memory storing predetermined sequences of patient information; and

a processor being coupled to the memory and the transfer device, the processor determining at least one characteristic of the data stream, determining whether a portion of data comprises patient information based on the characteristic, and modifying the portion of data if it comprises patient information.

28. The computer-based system of 27, wherein the characteristic comprises whether the data stream is a particular form.